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ABSTRACT

In promoting integration of exceptional children into regular classes, much emphasis has been placed on inservice and preservice preparation of teachers to develop skills and attitudes conducive to implementation of mainstreaming. Review of the literature indicated that structured inservice education programs were usually effective in providing knowledge about exceptional children, reducing anxiety toward mainstreaming, and developing more positive teacher attitudes toward exceptional children. The literature contains relatively few studies that focus on the modification of preservice teachers' attitudes toward exceptional children, with a conspicuous void relevant to preservice elementary teachers' attitudes. Most of the investigations studied special education majors, a population that should initially have positive attitudes toward exceptional children. Investigators have suggested that, although both information about or experience with exceptional children can lead to attitude change, a combination of information and experience is the most effective approach. However, there is little research to support this thesis. Similar lack of research and agreement on appropriate systems for delivering mainstreaming information to inservice and preservice teachers was also found. (37 references). (Author/JDD)

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Modifying Regular Classroom Teachers' Attitude
Toward Exceptional Children: A Review of the Literature

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As a result of Public Law 94-142, the Education of all Handicapped Children Act of 1975, many exceptional children have been removed from self-contained special classes and mainstreamed into the regular classroom. In promoting integration of exceptional children into regular classes much emphasis has been placed on preparation of teachers to develop skills and attitudes conducive to implementation mainstreaming. In fact, PL 94-142 mandates inservice training and encourages preservice training to accomplish this goal. However, educators have found teacher attitudes to be an obstacle to optimum integration of exceptional children and have begun to address the attitudinal issue by exploring various strategies which may be utilized to initiate attitude modification programs.

The purpose of this paper is to review research relating to the efficacy of training programs designed to modify regular classroom teachers' attitude toward mainstreamed students. Exceptional children are defined as those who have been diagnosed and evaluated as mentally handicapped, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, or physically impaired.

Inservice Training

Traditionally, inservice education has been the most used option for delivering information to teachers. Therefore, as the need arose to apprise teachers of procedures and instructional skills necessary for implementation of mainstreaming this method was most often employed. Relevant training programs emphasizing instructional techniques and knowledge of exceptional children are postulated as being conducive to positive teacher attitude change. Since relatively enduring changes in attitudes and behavior can occur as a result of rather brief treatment, this procedure appears to be valid (Rokeach, 1975).

Studies involving inservice training programs as a means of modifying teacher attitudes toward exceptional children have generally proven to be successful. However, Overline (1972) cautioned that, although attitudes may be predispositions to actions, they cannot be presumed to augur actual behavior changes. This hypothesis was supported by findings in Lapp's (1974) study which reported an absence of change in teacher behavior in the presence of significant positive changes in knowledge and attitude. Of similar note, Haring, Stern and Cruickshank (1958) suggested that, while workshops are highly effective in increasing teacher's information about and understanding of exceptional children, changes in attitude are not always a significant outcome.

Some investigations have focused on the preparation of elementary teachers for instruction of mildly handicapped children in regular

classrooms (Glass & Meckler, 1972; Shaw & Gillung, 1975). Functional preparation of teachers with emphasis on developing and practicing specific skills was the goal of both studies. Participants in Glass & Meckler's summer workshop were involved in instructional and planning sessions, the teaching of mildly handicapped students and parent meetings. Results indicated teachers were most positive toward mainstreaming and their ability to teach mildly handicapped children. Shaw and Gillung (1975) assessed the efficacy of a college course which included information components requiring practical implementation of skills in the areas of diagnostic-prescriptive teaching, classroom management and individualization. An analysis of data showed the treatment was effective in improving teacher attitude toward mildly handicapped children. Similarly Leyser and Abrams (1984) reports the positive effects of a graduate course in mainstreaming which was used as an inservice training program for a one semester period. As a result of the acquisition of knowledge about handicapped learners, the opportunity to experiment with newly acquired skills and interaction with peers, regular classroom teachers' attitudes toward exceptional students were more positive. Furthermore, contrary to the Glass and Meckler suggestion that traditional courses tended to be abstract rather than practical, these results supported the viability of college courses. In a related study, Jacobs (1977) reported that a course stressing education of exceptional children was effective in increasing classroom teachers' and administrators' information about exceptional

children and improving their attitudes toward exceptionalities.

Harasymiw and Horne (1976) found that teacher opinions and attitudes on mainstreaming can be modified through an inservice program designed to provide teachers with new knowledge about exceptional children and classroom experience working with special needs children. However, it was found that, while teachers became more liberal in their opinions and assessments of the manageability of the exceptional child in the regular classroom, their basic attitudes toward exceptionalities had not changed. These findings support those of an earlier investigation by Haring (1957) who reported that teachers' knowledge of exceptional children could be modified through a program of formal lectures, discussions, films and direct contact, but the acquisition of information did not guarantee positive attitude change. Additionally, negative attitude changes in principals and secondary teachers were reported by DeMoura (1987) and Walker (1985) in studies which stressed the acquisition of knowledge about mainstreaming and experience with exceptional children through planned inservice programs.

The teachers' role, personal expectations and school organization structure on his or her performance and attitudes may have been unexamined variables in many studies of attitudinal change. Brim (1966) maintains that attitude change is achieved through socialization and that socialization recognizes these influences.

The impact of the degree of inservice training on teachers' attitude toward mainstreaming was the focus of Larrivee's (1981) study. Results indicated that a one-year period of intensive inservice training,

which included contact with exceptional students, knowledge and skill attainment, and supportative assistance, resulted in significant positive changes in teacher attitudes toward exceptional students.

Other investigations have discovered a lack of significant change in attitudes at the completion of inservice training. A program intended to modify teachers' attitudes toward exceptional children through development of selected diagnostic-prescriptive teaching procedures and teachers' generalized use of these skills was developed by D'Zamko (1979). She found that, although teachers' attitudes toward exceptional children were not changed, a significant number were employing elements of a diagnostic-prescriptive format with exceptional children in their classrooms. Similarly, Myers (1975) reported public school administrators exhibited no appreciable increases in attitude toward or knowledge of appropriate placement of exceptional children after the completion of training workshops. There was also no change in regular classroom teachers' knowledge or attitude toward mainstreaming as a result of a two-day workshop in a study conducted by Brown (1985). The results of these studies are consistent with the position held by some researchers that attitudes are generally stable and resistant to change (Sherif & Sherif, 1976; Swanson, 1972).

The affective domain was the emphasis of a four week workshop for regular classroom teachers and administrators conducted by Brooks and Bransford (1971). Results indicated a notable positive shift in attitudes toward special education and the integration of exceptional children into regular classrooms. Penn (1972) reported that teachers and

administrators were more positive in their attitude toward integration of exceptional children as a result of a training program.

The short-term and long-term impact of professional development programs designed to improve teacher attitudes toward mainstreamed students were the focus of studies conducted by Inserni (1987) and Jacobson (1984). It was concluded that teachers showed a significant positive shift in attitudes toward exceptional children and these positive attitudes were sustained over the intervening months.

In summary, research indicated that structured inservice education programs were usually effective in providing knowledge about exceptional children, reducing anxiety toward mainstreaming and generally developing more positive teacher attitudes toward exceptional children. Although these investigations involved a different population, classroom teachers and administrators, it is presumed training programs for preservice teachers would produce similar results. An overview of research findings in modification of teacher attitudes as a result of inservice training are contained in Table 1.

Preservice Training

The literature contains relatively few studies that focus on the modifications of preservice teachers' attitudes toward exceptional children. An overview of the investigations cited in this section reveals that most are designed for special education majors, a population that should initially have positive attitudes toward exceptional children. Furthermore, most studies were unstructured, of short duration, pro-

Table 1

Overview of Research Findings: Modification of Teacher Attitudes
Toward Exceptional Children as a Result of Inservice Training

Positive change	No change	Negative change
Brooks and Bransford (1971) Use of a four week workshop for focus of attitudes and behavioral aspects of handicapped children with regular classroom teachers and administrators	Brown (1985) Effects of an intensive training program on all aspects of special education	DeMoura (1987) Effects of a ten-week (20 hour) program on principals' attitude toward mainstreaming handicapped students
Glass and Beckler (1972) Effects of summer workshop designed to improve instruction of mildly handicapped in regular classroom	D'zanko (1979) Effects of a diagnostic-prescriptive inservice education program on regular teachers attitudes toward handicapped pupils	Walker (1985) Effects of experience with special education classes
Haring (1957) Effects of lectures, discussion, films and direct contact on attitudes of classroom teachers toward exceptional children	Harasymiw and Horne (1976) Effects of inservice program designed to provide teachers with knowledge about and experience in working with exceptional children	
Inserni (1987) Short-term and long-term effects of four-day training program on teachers' attitudes.	Myers (1975) Use of a two week workshop with selected Illinois public school administrators	
Jacobs (1977) Information about exceptional children provided through a graduate level course designed to meet certification guidelines for teachers and school administrators		
Jacobson (1984) A two-day program to ascertain short-term and long-term effects on attitudes toward mainstreaming blind students		
Lapp (1974) Effects of behavior modification training on teachers behavior, teachers attitudes and knowledge of behavior modification		
Larribee (1981) Effect of degrees of inservice training on regular classroom teachers' attitudes		
Leyser and Abrams (1984) Use of a graduate course in mainstreaming to change attitudes of classroom teachers		
Overline (1972) Effects of a four day workshop in learning disabilities on elementary teachers' educational attitude and instructional activities		
Penn (1973) Effect of a training program on elementary teachers and administrators toward children with learning disabilities		

vided for no evaluation of long-term attitude change and had small populations.

The effectiveness of information in modifying special education students' attitudes toward exceptional children as a result of a course has been explored by some researchers. Drake (1977) reported more positive attitudes as a result of an introductory course in special education. However, Lazar, White and Sengstock (1975) found such a course resulted in no appreciable shift in student attitudes toward exceptional children. An earlier study conducted by Lazar, Opert and Demos (1973) indicated that utilization of a systematically designed course of instruction could change student attitude. Similiar results were also found by Leyser and Abrams (1983). Based upon these reports, the evidence is inconclusive relative to the efficacy of information in changing attitudes toward exceptional children.

It has been suggested that experience concurrent with courses designed to impart information about exceptional children will positively effect attitude change. Reid, et al. (1972) reported this technique was beneficial for preservice special education students and recommended its incorporation into teacher training programs. Conversely, Warren, Turner and Brody (1964) found no significant change in education students' attitude; in fact, attitude became more negative toward the brain injured and severely retarded child. The short duration of the participants' contact with exceptional children may have only resulted in reinforcing of negative stereotypical views of disabilities.

In a two-year study of the effects of modules for mainstreaming, field experiences and student teaching on the attitude of prospective elementary teachers, Francis (1982) found that knowledge of exceptional children can be increased as a result modules and field experiences. However, there was no difference in attitude as a result of either treatment. Additionally, participants exhibited no significant changes in knowledge or attitude toward exceptional children as a result of student teaching.

In an effort to change teacher perceptions of exceptional children, creative teaching strategies are being developed. Video and live presentations by individuals with visible physical handicaps were employed by Donaldson and Martinson (1977). Positive shifts in attitude were evident as a result of both types of presentations. Simulations of disabling conditions were used by other investigators to promote special education students understanding of the difficulties exceptional children may experience in the classroom. Glazzard (1979) cited the students' written reaction to the experience as evidence that the activities provoked and increased awareness of the effects of handicapping conditions. Wilson and Alcorn (1969) attempted to discover the relationship between simulation of a disability for an eight hour period and changes in attitude toward disabilities. No significant changes were measured, however the investigators recommended simulation as a useful instructional and motivational technique. Both of these studies may be criticized in that neither provided monitoring to insure that participants did in fact simulate the disabilities.

Traditional courses which included components relative to the characteristics of exceptional children and diagnostic-prescriptive teaching procedures have been an effective means for changing inservice teachers' attitudes. Sanche, Chapman and Dineen (1976) sought to determine their viability with preservice teachers. Following completion of such a course, teachers were more receptive to the idea of teaching exceptional children in the regular classroom. However, the investigators caution that these results represent teachers' expressed rather than manifest ideas toward mainstreaming.

A study designed to investigate whether information about and experience with exceptional children would improve preservice elementary education teachers' attitude toward and knowledge about mainstreaming was conducted by Johnson (1978). The findings indicated there was no increase in general knowledge about mainstreaming as a result of only information about or only experience with exceptional children. However attitudes were significantly more positive as a result of information about exceptional children and as a result of a combination of information about and experience with exceptional children. Finger (1984) also reported that as a result of a workshop designed to promote attitude change, strong correlations were found between general knowledge, mainstreaming experience and positive attitudes toward exceptional children. This appears to support the thesis that information concurrent with direct contact with the attitude object will positively modify attitudes.

In summary, a search of the literature revealed a conspicuous void of research relevant to preservice elementary teachers' attitudes toward exceptional children. As discussed earlier, the experimental design of many of the studies cited in this section was suspect to the extent the results are not generalizable. Consequently, there appears to be a crucial need for additional investigation in this area. An overview of research findings in modification of teacher attitude as a result of preservice training are contained in Table 2.

Summary

Investigators have suggested that, although information about and experience with exceptional children can lead to attitude change, a combination of information and experience is the most effective approach. Knowledge of the exceptional child provides the teacher with information relative to behavioral characteristics, diagnostic-prescriptive, teaching techniques and classroom management. Direct experiences with exceptional children provide the teacher a setting in which to apply the information being acquired. Although educators refer to the desirability of combining experiences with and information about exceptional children as a means to improve teacher attitude, there is little research to support this strategy. It can only be assumed that a combination approach may be more effective in improving teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming than is training in only one dimension. A similar lack of research and agreement on appropriate systems for delivering mainstreaming information to inservice and preservice teachers is also evident.

Table 2

Overview of Research Findings: Modification of Teacher Attitudes
Toward Exceptional Children as a Result of Preservice Training

Positive change	No change	Negative change
Donaldson and Martinson (1977) Utilization of live, audio and video presentations by disabled persons	Francis (1982) Effects of two instructional systems: one utilized knowledge; the other knowledge and field experiences	Warren, Turner and Brody (1964) Lecture, discussion, "guided-tour" techniques used
Drake (1977) Effect of introductory special education course	Johnson (1978) Effect of three procedures to change attitude (e.g., information, experience, combination of information and experience)	
Finger (1984) Correlations of knowledge, experience, positive attitudes and higher concerns about mainstreaming	Lazar, White and Sengstock (1975) Effect of introductory course concerning exceptional children	
Glazzard (1979) Effect of disability simulation (e.g. hearing impaired, visually impaired and orthopedically handicapped)	Wilson and Alcorn (1969) Effect of eight hour self-selected disability simulation	
Leyser and Abrams (1983) Effects of knowledge and experience in Dean's Grant program		
Reid, Reid, Whorton & Reichard (1972) Effect of contact, information and demonstrations in special education		
Sanche, Chapman and Dineen (1976) Effect of course which provides orientation to exceptional children and diagnostic teaching		
Shaw and Gillung (1975) Effect of course focusing on diagnostic-prescriptive, teaching, behavior modification and classroom management of mildly handicapped children in the regular classroom		

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